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SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS, AND THE VOTE

A Radio Discussion by KENNETH COLEGROVE
WALTER JOHNSON *and* CHARLES MERRIAM

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Around the Round Table . . . .

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WALTER JOHNSON, assistant professor in American history at the University of Chicago, is a native of Nahant, Massachusetts. He did his undergraduate work at Dartmouth College and received his A.B. degree there in 1937. He was granted his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago, where he specialized in recent American history. He has been a member of the department of history at the University of Chicago for the last three years. Besides his academic interests, Mr. Johnson has taken an active part in Illinois politics. He is the author of *America on the Eve of War*, which will be published soon, and at the present time is engaged in writing a biography of William Allen White.

CHARLES E. MERRIAM, distinguished service professor emeritus of political science at the University of Chicago, since 1933 has served as a member and vice-chairman of the National Resources Planning Board. Professor Merriam, who has been a member of the political science department of the University of Chicago since 1900, was a member of President Hoover's Commission on Recent Social Trends and is now a member of the President's Committee on Administrative Management. Professor Merriam has been active in Chicago politics and served three terms as alderman in the City Council and in 1911 was narrowly defeated for mayor of Chicago. Professor Merriam is a native of Iowa and studied at Lenox College and the State University of Iowa. He received his A.M. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University and has studied and traveled widely abroad. He is the author of many books, among which are: *A History of American Political Theories* (1903); *Primary Elections* (1908); *American Political Ideas, 1865–1917* (1921); *The American Party System* (1922); *New Aspects of Politics* (1925); *Four American Party Leaders* (1926); *Political Power* (1934); *Role of Politics in Social Change* (1936); *The New Democracy and the New Despotism* (1939); *Prologue to Politics* (1939); *What Is Democracy?* (1941); and *On the Agenda of Democracy* (1941).

SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS, AND THE VOTE

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MR. JOHNSON: Already the American people are showing tremendous interest in candidates and the issues of the 1944 campaign. It seems to me that seldom before in American history has there been such widespread attention toward politics a year before a presidential election.

MR. COLEGROVE: The Democrats seem almost unanimously agreed on re-electing Roosevelt as our Commander-in-Chief, while the Republicans are maneuvering for position, with Mackinac resolutions and Willkie versus Dewey. But some people seem to think that we should not talk politics in time of war.

MR. MERRIAM: The Americans are a voting people, and we like to talk politics and to talk elections. We always have, and we do now more than any other people in the world. We have a hundred and fifty thousand independent voting districts in this country, electing officers of one kind and another; and we have a total of about one million elective officials. We, in a sense, love elections. We like to discuss candidates; we like to discuss issues; we like to consider the platforms.

MR. JOHNSON: Gentlemen, with American democracy at war, the question has arisen whether soldiers should be permitted to vote.

The University of Chicago ROUND TABLE has received many letters containing arguments against the soldier vote. For instance, some say that soldiers are not interested in voting.

MR. COLEGROVE: Johnson, that is just "bunkum."

MR. JOHNSON: I asked my Army students here at the University the other day whether they thought that they should have the right to vote, and they were unanimous in that opinion.

MR. MERRIAM: Check for Merriam.

MR. JOHNSON: Another question that has been raised is that soldiers cannot get an appreciation of the real issues. Hence, they cannot vote intelligently.

MR. MERRIAM: There is plenty of opportunity for familiarizing the soldiers with the issues in the coming campaign. The national platforms will be adopted along in the summer of 1944. There will be speeches by leading partisans for weeks and weeks, and there will no doubt be broadcasts, which will be spread all over the world, by the presidential candidates.

MR. JOHNSON: The American Army newspaper might well take a lesson, in this connection, from the *Chicago Times*, which in each campaign runs a "battle page." On one side of the page is an argument presented by a Republican; on the other, an argument presented by a Democrat. The Army newspaper could run a battle page throughout the election, presenting the two points of view.

MR. COLEGROVE: That would obviate, of course, the temptation to editorialize on the part of the editors of the magazine.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, it would. A third argument used against soldier voting is that soldiers should not be put in the position of voting against or for their Commander-in-Chief. What do you think of that?

MR. COLEGROVE: That argument is silly. The soldiers, of course, will have gumption to vote against their Commander-in-Chief if

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they think that there would be a better Commander-in-Chief. Our soldiers have sufficient intelligence to know that all American citizens have the right to vote every four years to choose our Commander-in-Chief.

MR. JOHNSON: A fourth objection is that the officers' counting the vote may inhibit fair voting on the part of the soldiers.

MR. MERRIAM: I do not take that seriously at all. There are times when we do not get a square vote at home, and my guess is that in the Army they will get as fair a count as in their home towns.

MR. JOHNSON: For instance, recently, Australia used the mechanism of having the commanding officer in the various camps abroad count the vote of the soldiers. So far I have not heard any objection.

MR. MERRIAM: In South Africa likewise.

MR. JOHNSON: And there was no objection there that the votes were not counted properly.

A fifth question raised as an argument against the soldier's voting is that the sheer administrative load of the soldier vote is a severe handicap to the armed forces in wartime because of immense mechanical difficulties of disseminating information on the issues and the candidacies, distributing ballots, collecting votes, and so forth.

MR. COLEGROVE: The United States is the greatest combination of people, resources, and technology in the history of the whole world. We are solving gigantic problems of production and warfare. I think that it belittles American ability to think that we cannot solve the problem—a mechanical problem—of registering the soldier vote.

MR. MERRIAM: There certainly are administrative difficulties, but they're not insuperable. Where there is a will, there is a way. It has been suggested, for example, that there be a national bipartisan commission which might take charge of the whole electoral process

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from the national point of view. There are various other alternatives.[1]

MR. JOHNSON: How did the vote work out in past wars? Have American soldiers ever voted?

MR. MERRIAM: They voted in the Civil War, on the battlefield or in their respective camps.

MR. COLEGROVE: On that occasion, did not Joseph Medill propose soldier voting in the first place and carry the fight for it to the Secretary of War? The Secretary of War turned it down. Medill then appealed to the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, and Lincoln insisted that the soldiers should have the right to vote as a democratic institution.

MR. MERRIAM: That seems to be correct. My father used to say that in the Civil War the rule was that any man who was big enough to carry a gun was big enough to vote. I agree with that myself.

MR. JOHNSON: That raises the question whether all soldiers should vote or only those over twenty-one.

MR. MERRIAM: I should say all. From my point of view, all soldiers should vote in so far as that is administratively feasible and possible.

MR. COLEGROVE: I hate to disagree with you, Merriam, on that

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[1]There is a bill (Senate 1285), proposed by Senators Green and Lucas, before the United States Senate at the present time to amend present statutes (see note 2) and to provide special means of voting in times of war for members of the land and naval forces absent from their place of residence. The proposal provides for special cards to be printed for those serving in the armed forces within the United States on which they may request ballots from their respective secretaries of state. Each secretary of state will then provide members of the services thus requesting ballots with special "war ballots" and with envelopes and mailing facilities. For those members of the services who are overseas, the Secretary of War will supply "war ballots" for voting. Upon a designated day the commanding officer shall conduct the election and be responsible for returning by V-mail the ballots to the various secretaries of state.

subject, but I would have soldiers only twenty-one years of age and beyond have the right to vote.

MR. JOHNSON: Let us discuss the right of the eighteen-year-old to vote a little later on in this.

We have been talking about voting, but what election have we been talking about—next November, the presidential election of 1944, or have we been talking about next year's primaries? What have we been talking about?

MR. MERRIAM: We have been talking about the fall election in 1944. Of course, there are the primaries, but difficulty would arise in connection with primaries because of the fact that they are strung along from March, 1944, until September of the same year. So that, as far as state and local elections are concerned, there will be difficulty for soldiers voting overseas but not while they are in this country.

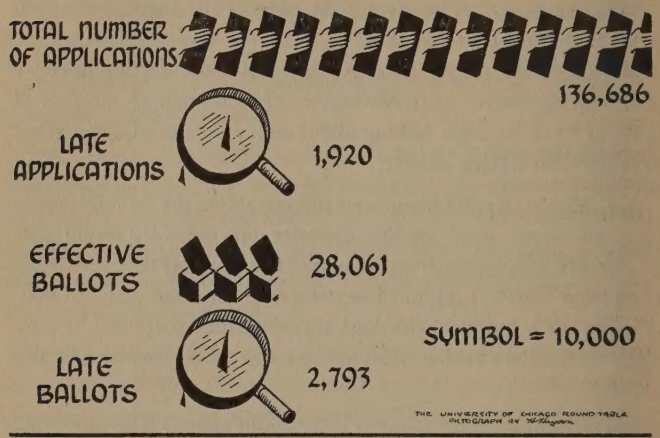
MR. JOHNSON: Your point of view would be that it would be desirable if possible but that the difficulties are so great in the case of the primaries that probably the soldier vote can be used only in the November election rather than during the primary period.

MR. MERRIAM: That may well be, but as far as it is feasible they can, and they should, vote in the primaries also.

MR. JOHNSON: Of course, it is very unfortunate that they are not able to vote in the primary because it is at the primary that each party chooses its candidates for the ticket the following November, and perhaps the primary is more important than the final election.

MR. COLEGROVE: I fear that, if we are going to expect to have war ballots from the soldiers overseas, we will have to limit their voting simply to federal officers—that is, for president and vice-president, or, that is, presidential electors, and for candidates for senators and representatives. The difficulties of getting the absentee ballots to our soldiers overseas are very great.

"WAR BALLOTS" ISSUED TO SOLDIERS IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1942



Source: Bureau of Census

MR. MERRIAM: The Soldier Ballot Act in 1942, now on the federal statute books, was a step in the right direction; but, of course, the law was hastily passed, and unquestionably it can be improved for 1944.[2]

[2] The federal absentee voting law (passed in September, 1942) provides members of the armed forces with a special method of wartime voting for federal officers. Under the law, application cards for official "war ballots" are prepared and distributed to members of the armed forces by the secretaries of War and Navy. These are mailed by the voters to the secretary of state in the state in which residence is claimed. Upon receipt of the application, the secretary of state mails, as soon as practicable, an official "war ballot" which may contain, in addition to federal officers to be voted upon, any state and local matters that the state may authorize. The ballot is marked and returned to the secretary of state. Neither registration nor the payment of a poll tax is required for voting "war ballots," but the applicants must meet all other suffrage qualifications.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, but that 1942 law relied upon the old absentee voting method . . . .

MR. MERRIAM: That's what it was based on, yes.

MR. JOHNSON: . . . . and that is too cumbersome to work with, say, the five million men we will have overseas. We must have something right on the spot which will enable the soldiers to vote, because they will not go through the process of writing home for an application for ballot; then wait until the ballot is sent them; mark the ballot; and mail it back. That's much too slow.

MR. COLEGROVE: The time limit also is altogether too short. For instance, in Arkansas you cannot receive applications for absentee votes more than ten days before the election; in Vermont, twelve days. That is altogether too short a time to get the ballot back to the secretaries of state in the various states.

MR. JOHNSON: We are all agreed that soldiers should vote. Is it just because of marching troops and bands playing, or is it because of some underlying assumption?

MR. COLEGROVE: It seems to me that we will have to take this question onto broad philosophical grounds. Why should people have the ballot in the first place? I think that the answer can be found in our concept of democracy. Our democracy is government by the people, of the people, and for the people. Government for the people, as John Stuart Mill has said, implies the increase of the sum of good qualities in the governed, collectively and individually —namely, the well-being of the people is the sole object of government. All this means that we should have wise and efficient government. We can have it only by treating the vote as a privilege and not as a right.

MR. JOHNSON: Voting, therefore, is essential to democracy, but you feel that it is a privilege, not a right.

MR. MERRIAM: In the narrower, more limited sense of the term,

voting is a privilege—a privilege that may be granted or may be withheld by the individual state, subject to certain limitations imposed by the United States Constitution. But, in a broader sense, voting is a right in the philosophical sense in which we speak of the philosophy of democracy. The Declaration of Independence declares that all men are equal. It declared in favor of the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and hinged the whole validity of government upon the consent of the governed. The instrument by which we consent to be governed is in the main the ballot.

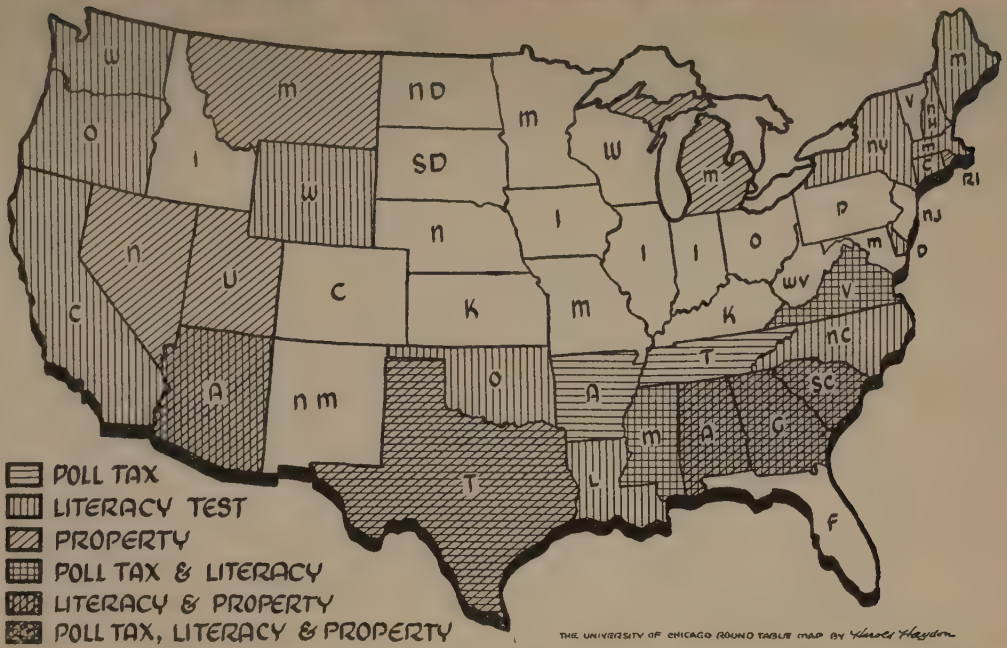
MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Jefferson held (and I agree with him) that voting is not only a philosophic right but a responsibility that people must accept if they are going to have a democracy in their society.

MR. COLEGROVE: I can hardly accept that. Jefferson was right on most points, but here I think that he was wrong. Voting is a right conferred by the state; the state can take it away. If we are going to have a democracy, if we are going to fulfil our purpose of government, we must have intelligent and wise voters. The state has a perfect right to take the vote away from those persons who they think are not capable or wise enough to participate in this function of government.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, but that is not the question that Merriam and I are raising here. We are raising the issue of whether voting is not a responsibility rather than just a privilege.

MR. COLEGROVE: I will agree that voting is a responsibility, but a very limited responsibility; and the state, of course, has the function of determining on whom that responsibility shall rest.

MR. MERRIAM: Isn't the vote the basis of the consent of the governed? You express your consent through the ballot. There are other ways, to be sure, but this is the one outstanding method. It seems to me that this marks the difference between a government by consent and a government by coercion.



Source: *Voting in the United States*. (Chicago: Council of State Governments, August, 1940). Six of the states showing property restrictions (Arizona, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Texas, and Utah) have this property-owning requirement only in votes on bond issues or special assessments, not for elected officers.

MR. COLEGROVE: Quite true; I will admit that government should be based upon consent. But consent of whom? Consent of the majority, not of the minority, which might not be qualified for voting?

MR. JOHNSON: Colegrove, you say that the state should take the right to vote away from those who do not have the equipment for intelligent voting and that the state should determine who should vote. But isn't the state the people, after all?

MR. COLEGROVE: Yes, the majority of the people. We hope, of course, that the majority of the people will be qualified for voting. But the state would be wholly within its rights as a state to limit the vote to those persons whom it considers wise and experienced in the art of participating in government.

MR. MERRIAM: One of the first steps in reducing the people to servitude is to take away their vote, or, in reverse, that is to say, not allow the ballot to be a genuine reality. It may be a coerced or intimidated ballot, as it is in Germany.

MR. COLEGROVE: But, Merriam, one of the first steps to the decay of a state is permitting minorities, or unfortunate groups, to get control of the government—a fact which sometimes can be accomplished through manipulation of the masses.

MR. JOHNSON: But, after all, a minority must have its rights respected in a democracy. Admittedly, a democracy means majority rule, but it also assumes that the rights of minority groups are respected. Isn't that right?

MR. MERRIAM: That is a part of the democratic process, yes. It is the process of tolerance for the rights of others.

MR. COLEGROVE: Please do not take me wrongly on this point. I insist that free speech is the very essence of democracy, and, while I would take voting away from some individuals, I would preserve, to the very limit, the right of free speech, because we can have free intelligence only by having unlimited free speech.

MR. MERRIAM: You would not deprive any persons of their ballot who now have the vote, would you?

MR. COLEGROVE: I am afraid that I would. Do you want to have me give you a definite answer?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. What basis would you use to deprive people of the right to vote?

MR. COLEGROVE: Well, one is intelligence. Another is participation in the democratic process. Those who have certain intelligence, which we can measure by all sorts of tests—we can set up the various tests we want. Those persons who do not meet that test should be deprived of the right to vote.

MR. JOHNSON: I hope that you are not going to use these general intelligence tests to try to find out how intelligent the American public is, because I do not think that they measure that type of thing.

MR. COLEGROVE: No, we would have to use tests that are—some of them, that is—rule-of-thumb, of course, but they can be made to work.

MR. MERRIAM: That is a matter of local law in this country. The individual states determine the terms and conditions on which men shall vote, but, broadly, it is a system of universal suffrage, isn't it, men and women alike?[3]

MR. COLEGROVE: Yes, by the majority.

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[3] The Constitution of the United States, Article I, section 4, says: "The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to places of choosing Senators." See Office of War Information pamphlet on *State Absentee Voting and Registration Laws* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942) for an analysis of absentee provisions among the various states and *Voting in the United States* (Chicago: Council of State Governments, August, 1940) for a summary of voting requirements in each state.

MR. MERRIAM: By the majority.

MR. JOHNSON: We have now raised this very important point which makes it clear that we want the soldiers to vote, not just because they are in uniform, particularly, but because there are certain underlying assumptions in American democracy, one of which is that the vote is necessary in order to have an essential functioning democratic government. With that assumption in mind, how do you explain the fact that so many people in American life do not use the right to vote when they have it?

MR. MERRIAM: In times of peace, you mean?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. MERRIAM: We made a study, Dr. Gosnell and I, several years ago, at the University of Chicago, of nonvoting. We examined a great many cases—five thousand or so—in great detail to see if we could determine why habitual nonvoters did not vote. I do not want to bore you with all the detail of that, but there were several groups. One of the largest groups is the absentee voter—people who are out of town at election time. We have covered that since by provisions for absentee voting.[4]

MR. JOHNSON: How many states have the right of absentee votes?

MR. COLEGROVE: Only forty-three, at the present time.[5]

MR. JOHNSON: Merriam, what were some of the other reactions you discovered?

MR. MERRIAM: Another one of the groups was those who were ill. We have not made provision in our laws for those yet. If you

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[4] See Charles E. Merriam and Harold F. Gosnell, *Non-voting: Causes and Methods of Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924).

[5] Absentee voting is not provided for in general elections in the states of Delaware, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, and South Carolina.

happen to be sick in bed and at your own home, you cannot vote; if you are out of town, you may. We have not covered that yet.

Another group is made up of those whom we classified as being generally indifferent. There were various classes of those. Sometimes a man who was indifferent would say, "I don't have any truck with politics. I don't care anything about government." That's a small group.

MR. COLEGROVE: Merriam, I am not interested in the problem of recruiting a 100 per cent vote in every election in the United States. Precinct captains, who are directed by political machines and who knock at everybody's door in order to bring out all the laggard votes, are almost the negation of intelligent democracy today.

MR. JOHNSON: I think, however, that in the last twenty years the importance of the precinct captain has declined in American politics. The radio, for instance, has reached people so that they do not need to listen to the precinct captain. They tend to go out to vote on bigger issues.

MR. COLEGROVE: You are a good enough politician, Johnson, to know from your own practical experience how much you have to depend on the precinct captain to get out your vote to elect you to office.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. There is no question but that you have to use the precinct captain, but I do not think that that is as important a factor as it was, say, twenty years ago.

In this problem of nonvoting, Merriam, you did not mention a case that can often happen. Take a war worker who has to be at his plant at six-thirty in the morning and whose voting place is open at six, but the Republican or the Democratic precinct captain, whichever it might be, knows that this voter who is coming is going to vote the opposite party and that he is going to come early. So he gets his friends all to come there and line up in front of the booth in such a line that there are thirty people ahead of the war worker.

The war worker may see those thirty people and say, "Oh, well," and go on.

MR. MERRIAM: Yes, but that is not at all typical. He is allowed time off to vote if he cares to take it.

There are classes of people, however, who do not vote for different reasons—"satisfied voters," we called them. Here is a man who finds that both candidates are pretty good and that the platforms are about the same. He does not see any very clear issues. He says, "I'll not vote. I'm satisfied whichever way it comes out."

MR. COLEGROVE: Let me state, in a little different language, something I said just a minute ago. The game of politics today, unhappily, is nothing else but a nation-wide effort by professional and amateur politicians to drag to the polls people who would not otherwise take the trouble of casting their votes.

MR. MERRIAM: I do not agree with that, Colegrove. The party is an instrument for the purpose of developing democratic discussion and democratic decision on issues and on personalities.

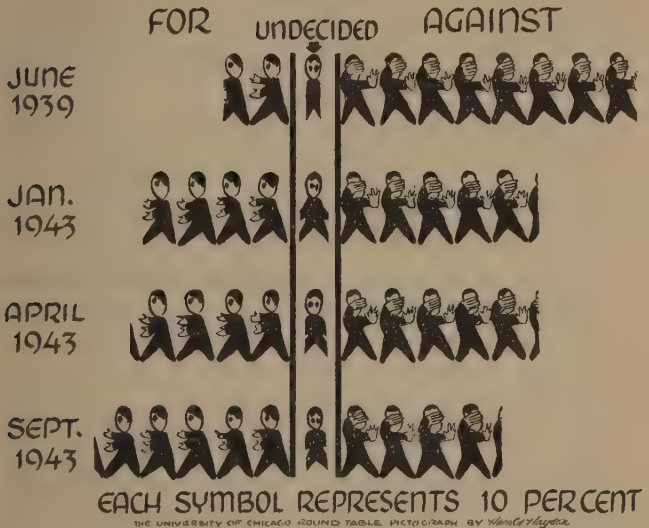
MR. JOHNSON: The 1942 election is a good case to discuss when we are mentioning the problem of nonvoting. In that election the amazing thing was that a total of only twenty-eight million votes was cast by the two parties, whereas, two years before, in the presidential election of 1940, fifty million people voted. That is, in 1942, twenty-two million less people voted than had in 1940.

MR. MERRIAM: If you break that down, that is not perhaps so significant. The latest one was a congressional election; there was nothing of the brilliant clash between opposing presidential candidates.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, but it is true that certain war workers lost the right to vote because they had transferred their residence and had not been long enough in the new state. Also, certain soldiers did not vote.

MR. MERRIAM: There are elections when the percentage of vot-

SHOULD THE EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLDS VOTE?



Source: Gallup Poll, September 5, 1943. The pollers asked: "Would you like to have your Congressmen vote for a constitutional amendment which would allow 18, 19 and 20 year olds to vote in elections?"

ing is only 25 per cent or is only 50 per cent. We might say that the general national average is about 75 to 80 per cent.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. The interesting thing that I would like to bring out about the 1942 election is that it does not show any gain, or any Republican upsurgence. The Republicans lost votes in 1942 over what they got in 1940; but the Democrats lost more votes in 1942 than did the Republicans.

MR. MERRIAM: It seems to me that whether the Republicans or the Democrats went up or down in an off-year election like 1942

is not fundamentally significant. That is interesting, if true, but what bearing does that have on the general question of voting?

MR. COLEGROVE: It means simply that the signal is flashed then to the precinct workers all down the line of the Democratic party that they will have to get busy and pull more doorknobs to get the electorate out in 1944.

MR. MERRIAM: A party organization will be jockeying back and forth, and they ought to be; that is part of their business.

MR. JOHNSON: On the problem of the vote, do you think that the eighteen-year-olds should be permitted to vote?

MR. COLEGROVE: Johnson, I do not. I think that it is unwise to lower the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen. The young people under twenty-one years of age today do not have the experience and the wisdom to exercise the vote, I think.

MR. JOHNSON: But the eighteen-year-old today knows more about the world and its problems than did the twenty-one-year-old of a generation ago.

MR. COLEGROVE: Yes, Johnson, but you know from your own students in the University of Chicago that your Freshmen and your Sophomores are Republicans or Democrats just because their fathers and mothers were Republicans or Democrats. It is only when young people become Seniors or graduate students that they begin to think for themselves and determine their own decision with reference to political questions.

MR. JOHNSON: I do not entirely agree with you there. I think that by the time young men and women reach the age of eighteen they generally have enough knowledge to decide for themselves for what candidate or issue they are going to vote.

MR. COLEGROVE: Have you any statistics on that?

MR. JOHNSON: No, I have no figures except that the Gallup poll

has suggested that in young age groups seven out of ten will vote more liberally and more progressively than will the older voters.

MR. MERRIAM: I have other figures that will show just the opposite—that the younger are more conservative, and as they grow somewhat older they are more liberal, if you can draw a sharp line between what is "liberal" and what is "conservative" these days.

MR. JOHNSON: An argument for the eighteen-year-old vote, which I think has a great deal of value to it, is that the only way to learn about American politics is through participation. If the eighteen-year-old begins to participate in politics at that age, he learns much more readily than if he waits until later on.

MR. COLEGROVE: If that argument is valid, of course, you would put young men into the first line of the football game right at the very beginning, instead of giving them a long training and practice beforehand.

MR. JOHNSON: I think that voting and football are several different things, Colegrove.

MR. COLEGROVE: Quite true, but the more schooling a man has, the more experience a person has before he exercises this privilege rather than right, the better he will perform.

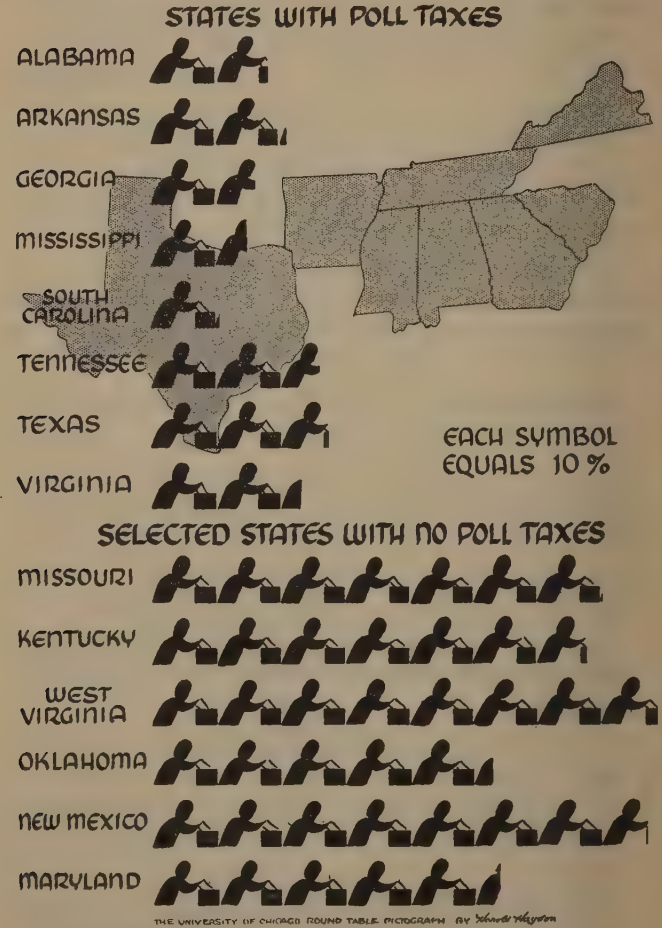
MR. JOHNSON: Yes, but the eighteen-year-old today has more education, generally, than the average voter of fifty years and up.

MR. COLEGROVE: That is true, and our adult population has more education than the adult population several years ago. It is a relative matter.

MR. JOHNSON: In addition to the eighteen-year-old-vote issue, there is the question of the poll tax which, in eight southern states, deprives both white and colored people who do not pay this tax of the right to vote. Is that a very vital issue in this coming election?[6]

[6] The eight states which require the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting are Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF ADULT POPULATION WHICH VOTED IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1928 AND 1932



Source: Southern Conference for Human Welfare

MR. MERRIAM: It seems to be a very vital issue in Congress at the present moment, but that is a long story.

MR. COLEGROVE: I am inclined to think that, since elections in general are a matter of local concern in the United States—only our national officers can be considered as involved in the national election—we ought to leave the question of the poll tax to localities.

MR. JOHNSON: I feel that the poll tax should be solved nationally for federal offices—that is, from congressmen up through senator and president.

How effective, gentlemen, in expressing the public will is the vote? We have discussed here nonvoting and voting, but just how effective does the vote express the public will in any given election?

MR. MERRIAM: It is the best mirror that we have. It is the best expression of public will that the world has been able to devise thus far.

MR. COLEGROVE: But, after the vote is cast, very frequently pressure groups are much more effective in getting Congress to act, or getting the President to act or to change his line of action, than is the ballot. For instance, Congress continually lags behind public opinion with reference to foreign policy. I think that the Gallup poll has shown that. Congress has acted only in response to pressure groups, particularly, let us say, with reference to the repeal of the neutrality legislation on the eve of our world war.

MR. JOHNSON: In answering that question, I would say that in periods of crisis the people have been able to express their will through the ballot box, such as in 1800, when they elected Jefferson; in 1828, Jackson; in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt. But, then, there are other elections, such as 1920, when many people voted for Warren G. Harding, thinking that he was for internationalism—he himself said so several times, as did leading Republicans—but later found out that this was not so.

MR. MERRIAM: What better instrument than voting has anyone found for determining the will of the people in a free country?

MR. COLEGROVE: Unfortunately, there is no better instrument. I would like to improve that instrument by considering the vote as a privilege and not as a right.

MR. JOHNSON: I would like to improve the instrument by having the people make sure that, when a politician speaks, he says what he means and that he means what he says, so that he will not, after the vote, go on to desert his pledge.

MR. COLEGROVE: In 1920 the people were misled by the politicians with reference to the League of Nations.

MR. JOHNSON: Of what value are public opinion polls in trying to determine the will of the people?

MR. MERRIAM: Just a moment, before you come to that, if I may say a word about the congressional lag. I suppose that a policy-determining body does wait until public opinion matures and brings pressure to bear upon it. There always have been pressure groups, and there always will be. That is only you and me and somebody else combining to try to influence the policy-determining body. Sometimes Congress moves with great expedition; sometimes it lags behind.

MR. COLEGROVE: You will admit, however, that Congress has been far behind the Gallup poll with reference to foreign policy?

MR. MERRIAM: I would say something about Gallup polls if there were time, but I do not believe that we have the occasion here to do it.

MR. JOHNSON: You feel, then, that the public opinion poll does not reflect public opinion as well as does the vote. Is that correct?

MR. MERRIAM: If public opinion has been maturing for some time, as, say, at the end of a presidential election, you can get a pretty good line on what men are going to do by an opinion poll. But if you spring upon a voter some issue that he has not thought very much about and ask him, "Yes," "No," or "Maybe," before

there has been full deliberation and discussion, he may say "Yes" or "No" when he really has not thought it out. One of the purposes of a representative body is to bring about full and thorough discussion of the measures before we pass on them.

MR. JOHNSON: Gentlemen, the consensus in this discussion has been that, with American democracy locked in mortal combat, the soldier must, by all means, express himself through the ballot. Not only the soldier's bullet but his ballot should help to determine the destiny of the nation.

Philosophically, the election process is fundamental to democracy. As to whether the vote is a privilege or a responsibility, there was disagreement. Colegrove holds that voting is a privilege, while Merriam and I hold that it is a responsibility. Even though voting is fundamental to democracy, there is, however, a wide area of nonvoting because of indifference or the difficulty of getting an absentee ballot.

On the question of the effectiveness of the vote in expressing the public will, there was some disagreement. All of us believe that voting should express the public will, but Colegrove and I feel that sometimes candidates fail to carry out the will.

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What Do *You* Think?

1. In your opinion should Congress enact the necessary laws and authorize the needed procedures to make it possible for all soldiers to vote in the coming elections? Do you think that every member of the armed forces, regardless of age, should be allowed to vote?

2. Would you approve the passing of a constitutional amendment to allow persons eighteen, nineteen, and twenty years old to vote in elections? Do you think young persons eighteen to twenty are sufficiently well informed and mature enough to vote wisely?

3. Do you agree with Mr. Colegrove that the vote is a privilege and not a right? That certain measures of participation and intelligence should be applied to those now having the ballot? Do you think that those persons who do not meet these tests should be deprived of the right to vote?

4. Do you agree with Mr. Merriam that, in the broad sense, "voting is a right in the philosophical sense in which we speak of the philosophy of democracy"? Is voting a responsibility that people must accept if the society is to be a democracy?

5. Do you agree with Mr. Colegrove that "the game of politics today, unhappily, is nothing else but a nation-wide effort by professional and amateur politicians to drag to the polls people who would not otherwise take the trouble of casting their votes"? Do you think that a high voting participation has any relation to the working effectiveness of American politics?

6. Do you think that the poll tax is desirable? Do you believe that the question of the poll tax should be left to the separate states, or do you think that Congress should take action to insure that all federal elective officers should be chosen in poll-tax-free elections?

7. What are the changes that might be made in wartime political campaigns as compared to normal peacetime political activity? Should political candidates be allowed to speak in Army camps in this country or abroad? Should political candidates be allowed to review troops, etc.?

8. How effective is the vote in expressing the consent of the governed? How does the public opinion poll compare with the vote in success in the expression of public opinion? What was the will of the governed as revealed in the last congressional election?

The People Say....

The following letters are representative of the views expressed by the ROUND TABLE *audience on "Russia's Foreign Policy," broadcast September 12, 1943.*

*

Join Russia Wholeheartedly

The U.S.S.R. is to us progressive, as we were once when democracy was young. We believe and trust in them and think our country and Great Britain would do well to go in with them wholeheartedly instead of fencing with them. When the Anglo-Americans can dirty their hands to deal with Vichy, Franco, vested interests, etc., I do not see why they cannot be fairer with the U.S.S.R. The trouble is, as I see it, that there are so many reactionaries, Fascists, capitalists, and vested interests in our own camp that are afraid to lay their cards on the table and then always wonder why the other fellow does not do so.....—*A listener from Detroit, Michigan.*

*

Fighting for Self-determination of Nations

You discussed the Russian situation regarding the Baltic States and the Balkans partly, although that was not the main object of the discussion. Now the question should not be whether Russia should annex those little states or some Balkan States. What we are fighting for is the self-determination of all states, so why not let those states vote on whether they want to belong to one country or the other or be by themselves? According to most of the discussion of your ROUND TABLE, it is always the big powers that will have all the say after the war is over. When Dr. Beneš spoke, some weeks ago, he, too, failed to mention the ballot box which should be used to determine whether some minorities want to belong to larger powers or not and, if so, which ones.—*A listener from Argyle, New York.*

*

An Alliance of the "Big Four"

There is only one way to have world peace for a time at least and that is for the Big Four—United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China—to form an alliance strong enough to disarm all other nations, giving them the freedom of having any kind of government that they desire with the understanding that they cannot have an army or navy or any kind of armed force. Then, we will give free entry of goods and persons to any who desire and who will respect the rules otherwise imposed by the country entered. This will assure peace and prosperity to the world, however, just so long as the Big Four are friendly one to

another. That is the only kind of international police force which will mean anything. . . . .—*A listener from Roseville, California.*

*

Be a "Good Neighbor"

. . . . Let us be a "good neighbor" to Russia, but as for taking her into the family—it is a doubtful procedure. If the Anglo-American family will forget old quarrels and "make up" for good, it need have no fear of any nation or of any combination of nations. It will engender no fear on the part of any other power or powers that are peacefully inclined. It will, better than any attempted world alliance or tripartite alliance, serve notice to all aggressors that the age of aggression has passed.—*A listener from Muncie, Indiana.*

*

Restore Smaller Nations

. . . . If we are fighting for freedom from fear, why should we discuss such matters as the absorption of the smaller states into the larger ones for the protection of the larger ones? Let us hope that each of the small nations that has been victimized by Hitler will be fully restored and protected in its territorial rights and that there may be such international arrangements as to preclude the necessity for nations to try to protect themselves from each other.—*A listener from Garfield, Washington.*

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*

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2:00 P.M. EASTERN WAR TIME

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Allentown, Pa.	WSAN	1470	Martinsville, Va.	WMVA	14
Altoona, Pa.	WFBG	1340	Miami, Fla.	WIOD	6
Asheville, N.C.	WISE	1400	New York, N.Y.	WEAF	6
Atlanta, Ga.	WSB	750	Norfolk, Va.	WTAR	7
Bluefield, W.Va.	WHIS	1440	Philadelphia, Pa.	KYW	10
Boston, Mass.	WBZ	1030	Pittsburgh, Pa.	KDKA	10
Charleston, S.C.	WTMA	1250	Portland, Me.	WCSH	9
Charleston, W.Va.	WGKV	1490	Providence, R.I.	WJAR	9
Charlotte, N.C.	WSOC	1240	Raleigh, N.C.	WPTF	6
Cincinnati, Ohio	WLW	700	Reading, Pa.	WEEU	8
Clarksburg, W.Va.	WBLK	1400	Richmond, Va.	WMBG	13
Cleveland, Ohio	WTAM	1100	Rochester, N.Y.	WHAM	11
Columbia, S.C.	WIS	560	Savannah, Ga.	WSAV	13
Detroit, Mich.	WWJ	950	Springfield, Mass.	WBZA	10
Florence, S.C.	WOLS	1230	Springfield, Ohio	WIZE	13
Grand Rapids, Mich.	WOOD	1300	Syracuse, N.Y.	WSYR	5
Greenville, S.C.	WFBC	1330	Tampa, Fla.	WFLA	9
Greenwood, S.C.	WCRS	1450	Toledo, Ohio	WSPD	7
Jacksonville, Fla.	WJAX	930	Washington, D.C.	WRC	9
Johnstown, Pa.	WJAC	1400	Williamsport, Pa.	WRAK	14
Harrisburg, Pa.	WKBO	1230	Wilmington, Del.	WDEL	11
Lakeland, Fla.	WLAK	1340	Winston-Salem, N.C.	WSJS	6
Lima, Ohio	WLOK	1240	York, Pa.	WORK	13

1:00 P.M. CENTRAL WAR TIME

Birmingham, Ala.	WBRC	960	Louisville, Ky.	WAVE	9
Bismarck, N.D.	KFYR	550	Madison, Wis.	WIBA	13
Chicago, Ill.	WMAQ	670	Mankato, Minn.	KYSM	12
Dallas, Texas	WFAA	820	Memphis, Tenn.	WMC	7
Des Moines, Iowa	WHO	1040	Mobile, Ala.	WALA	14
Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis.	WEBC	1320	Montgomery, Ala.	WSFA	14
Eau Claire, Wis.	WEAU	1070	Nashville, Tenn.	WSM	6
El Paso, Texas	KSTM	1380	New Orleans, La.	WSMB	13
Evansville, Ind.	WGBF	1280	Oklahoma City, Okla.	WKY	9
Fargo, N.D.	WDAY	970	Omaha, Neb.	WOW	5
Fort Wayne, Ind.	WOWO	1190	Rochester, Minn.	KROC	13
Hattiesburg, Miss.	WFOR	1400	St. Cloud, Minn.	KFAM	14
Hibbing, Minn.	WMFG	1240	Shreveport, La.	KTBS	14
Houston, Texas	KPRC	950	Sioux Falls, S.D.	KSOO	11
Indianapolis, Ind.	WIRE	1430	Springfield, Mo.	KGBX	12
Kansas City, Mo.	WDAF	610	Terre Haute, Ind.	WBOW	12
Kingsport, Tenn.	WKPT	1400	Tulsa, Okla.	KVOO	11
La Crosse, Wis.	WKBH	1410	Virginia, Minn.	WHLB	14
Little Rock, Ark.	KARK	920	Wichita, Kan.	KANS	12

12:00 M. MOUNTAIN WAR TIME

Albuquerque, N.M.	KOB	770	Phoenix, Ariz.	KTAR	6
Billings, Mont.	KGHL	790	Pocatello, Ida.	KSEI	9
Boise, Ida.	KIDO	1380	Safford, Ariz.	KGLU	14
Bozeman, Mont.	KRBM	1450	Salt Lake City, Utah	KDYL	13
Butte, Mont.	KGIR	1370	Tucson, Ariz.	KVOA	12
Denver, Colo.	KOA	850	Twin Falls, Ida.	KTFI	12
Helena, Mont.	KPFA	1240	Yuma, Ariz.	KYUM	12

11:00 A.M. PACIFIC WAR TIME

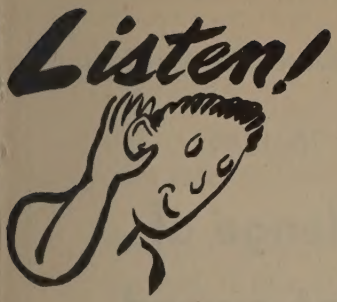
Bakersfield, Cal.	KERN	1410	Sacramento, Cal.	KFBK	15
Fresno, Cal.	KMJ	580	San Diego, Cal.	KFSD	6
Los Angeles, Cal.	KFI	640	Seattle, Wash.	KOMO	9
Medford, Ore.	KMED	1440	Spokane, Wash.	KHQ	5
Portland, Ore.	KGW	620			

STATIONS CARRYING ROUND TABLE BY TRANSCRIPTION

Buffalo, N.Y.	WBEN	930	Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn.	KSTP	15
Columbus, Ohio	WCOL	1230	St. Louis, Mo.	KSD	5
Milwaukee, Wis.	WTMJ	620	San Francisco, Cal.	KPO	6
Minneapolis, Minn.	WLB	770	Schenectady, N.Y.	WGY	8

BY TRANSCRIPTION VIA SHORT WAVE

Anchorage, Alaska	KFQD	790	Juneau, Alaska	KINY	14
Fairbanks, Alaska	KFAR	610	Ketchikan, Alaska	KTAN	9



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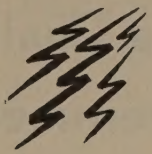

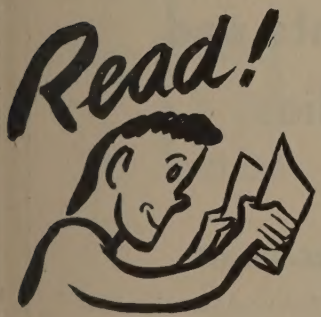

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SUGGESTED READINGS

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